

### *Amendments to the Claims*

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving computer data from a first computer for transmission to a second computer via a network; and

screening the computer data for at least one virus before communicating the computer data to the second computer, wherein said screening comprises creating a model of the second computer, installing a program contained in the computer data on the model, and screening the model for the at least one virus.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the network comprises an IP network.

3. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

if the at least one virus is detected, performing at least one of the following:

- (i) inhibiting communication of at least a portion of the computer data to the second computer;

- (ii) removing the at least one virus from the computer data prior to transferring the computer data to the second computer;

- (iii) communicating a message indicating that the at least one virus was detected to the second computer;

(iv) communicating a message indicating that the at least one virus was detected to the first computer; and

(v) writing data to a database indicating that the at least one virus was detected.

4. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

receiving computer data from the second computer for transmission to the first computer; and

screening the computer data received from the second computer for at least one virus before communicating the computer data received from the second computer to the first computer.

5. (currently amended) A ~~system~~ virus screening device operative to be connected to a network and operative to screen computer data received from a first computer for at least one virus before communicating the computer data to a second computer, the virus screening device~~system~~ comprising:

~~a network;~~

~~a first computer;~~

~~a second computer in communication with the first computer via the network;~~

and

~~a virus screening device connected to the network operative to screen computer data received from the first computer for at least one virus before communicating the computer data to the second computer~~

a model of the second computer, the model configured to have a program contained in said computer data installed thereon, and wherein said model is further configured to be screened for the at least one virus.

6. (original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the network comprises an IP network.

7. (original) The system of Claim 5, wherein a configuration associated with the second computer routes communicated data to the virus screening device.

8. (original) The system of Claim 5, further comprising:

a third computer communicatively linked to the second computer via a local area network, wherein the virus screening device resides outside the local area network.

9. (original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the computer data comprises an electronic mail message.

10. (original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the computer data comprises data requested by the second computer from the first computer.

11. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving screened data from a network-based virus screening device configured to screen data for at least one virus before communicating the data to a first computer, wherein said screening of data comprises creating a model of the first computer, installing on the model a program contained in the data, and screening the model for the at least one virus; and

forwarding the screened data to the first computer.

12. (original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising: receiving a request for requested data from the first computer;

sending the request across a network to a second computer; and

requesting that the requested data be returned via the network-based virus screening device.

13. (original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the network comprises an IP network.

14. (original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the network-based virus screening device resides within a wide area network, and wherein the method further comprises:

receiving across a local area network a request for requested data from the first computer;

sending the request across the wide area network to a second computer; and

requesting that the requested data be returned via the network-based virus screening device.

15. (original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

receiving a request for requested data from the first computer at a modem external to the first computer; and

initiating communication of the request from the modem across an IP network to a second computer.

16. (original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising: forwarding a request to terminate a virus screening function of the network-based virus screening device.

17. (original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

configuring the network-based virus screening device to inhibit communication of at least a portion of the requested data.

18. (original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

configuring the network-based virus screening device to inhibit communication of executables to the first computer.

19. (original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the network-based virus screening device resides within a wide area network, and wherein the method further comprises:

configuring the network-based virus screening device to inhibit communication of executables to the first computer; and

configuring an electronic mail system associated with the first computer to route messages addressed to the first computer through the network-based virus screening device.

20. (original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the first computer is communicatively coupled to a local area network and the network-based virus screening device resides outside a firewall associated with the local area network, and wherein the method further comprises:

configuring the network-based virus screening device to inhibit communication of executables to the first computer; and

configuring an electronic mail system associated with the first computer to route messages addressed to the first com